

# A retreat of a different nature beckons

As I write, I am looking forward to a retreat I shall be making from Friday night until Tuesday noon. The prospect of stepping away from daily activity for a few days of prayer delights me.

For most years since I have been a bishop, I have made my annual retreat around this time of year. That is because over that time the bishops of the dioceses of our state developed the custom of making a retreat together for a few days immediately after our January business meeting. This year, however, we decided not to make the retreat together because some are involved in the Holy Father's visit to Cuba and all of us will be traveling to Rome together at the end of February.

I have enjoyed those experiences over the years and hope that there will be sufficient interest among the bishops to hold them again in the future. At the same time, I welcome the prospect of a quieter kind of retreat experience this year.

On the bishops' retreat we usually have two or three conferences a day with a leader whom we engage to lead us in prayer. Often we have spent time in conversation together about the themes developed by the retreat master and how they might help us in our pas-

## along the way

BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

toral activity. In the days ahead, I will be on my own. My hope is to enter the retreat with a desire to listen to the Lord and a readiness to go where he leads me.

Sharing that information with you reminds me of the variety of retreats I have experienced over the years as leader and as participant. Some have a format similar to the one we bishops have usually followed for our January retreats.

Another model is the one followed by the Preaching the Just Word retreats developed by Jesuit Father Walter Burkhardt and associates. In that format, participants certainly pray but are also very active in team work and homily preparation.

Directed retreats are another experience quite popular in recent years. In that kind of retreat the individual spends the day in prayer, generally



rooted in Scripture. Then, generally once a day, the retreatant shares her or his experience of that day's prayer with the director, and together they decide how to approach prayer for the following day.

There are many variations to those types of retreats and others I have not mentioned. I have had the privilege of experiencing many of them. Forced to pick my favorite form, I would choose the directed retreat. More specifically, I would choose a directed retreat that followed the inspiration of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

The reason for my preference is rooted, I am sure, in two wonderful experiences I have had of that kind of retreat. The first of those was in Rome in 1973 and the other was at Guelph, Ontario, in 1987. I know that it will not surprise you that a huge factor in the beauty of those retreats was the wisdom and sensitivity with which my two directors were endowed. I never forget them.

You can be sure that during this retreat I will be praying both in thanksgiving for the joy of living and working among you, and in petition for the peace, health and happiness of you and your loved ones.

Peace to all.



After 10 years of maintaining a home, I decided it was time to ease up on myself. And moving to Chapel Oaks seemed to be the perfect solution. I'm very independent and enjoy taking trips to my summer home in Canada. Living at Chapel Oaks allows me to simply lock my door and go. I don't have to worry about my belongings. It's this added security and convenience that made this decision even easier to make.

Marc Martin Haskel  
Formerly of Frankford, New York

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